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EDITORIAL: THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW

"Down with the False Religions!" Not long ago I remember reading this heading in a well known Christian news publication. How incredibly narrow-minded! and this is the 20th Century! Perhaps I should be more precise. The "False Religions" included all religions except Christianity, and were, in particular, those of the East - the age old philosophies of Confucianism, Buddhism, Islam and, especially, Hinduism whose roots go back more than 3,000 years before Christ was even born."

We may have lost the fire and brimstone of our Victorian predecessors, but regardless of what modern Christians would like to think, we have not lost their stodginess. Certainly there is ever increasing support for abolition of race prejudice and greater toleration, but the bitter truth is that this support comes chiefly from the increasing number of disinterested materialists and from those Christians who see the proposal as a fine "Christian" ideal, - but only while it is several thousand miles away from home.

We seem capable of adapting our art, our music, and our poetry to this modern era, but we grimly cling to our old medieval religious concepts as if any moderation in them will only lead to certain damnation. And then we wonder why so many young intellectuals are "drifting" away from the "fold"! Is it not possible that they want something more than sheep-like security from the object of their devotion?

Surely it is time we began searching for a 20th-Century religion. The only other alternative for international cooperation seems to be universal irreligion and certainly this is a very starved and negative approach, as well as being one totally unacceptable to a large percentage of the world's population.

Is the idea of universal religion, or at least the first step toward it - a state of universal religious toleration, - entirely impossible? Hinduism has, I believe, a promisingly mature approach in its assumption of tolerance for all religions and its firm belief in the intrinsic worth of any manner of worship. In its wise and experienced eyes it sees every religion as the answer

for a specific temperament or society. All religions worship the same God or Absolute, merely with the stress laid on different aspects of His Being. Please don't think I'm advocating world-wide Hinduism. In its modern application it probably has as many faults as any other religion. I'm simply attempting to illustrate the maturity of views in an older and (one might add, after viewing Christian exploits throughout history), perhaps a more successful religion than Christianity.

I'm sure Christians abroad have excellent intentions, but in the light of such factors does the West have any right to send in Christian missionaries to "convert" the "heathen" from his older and more culturally suitable beliefs to the ideas of a modern western culture in which he does not live. It has been proved time and again that disrupting the traditional religious views of a culture, without totally converting the community's economy, politics and ways of life to our own system, causes only harm and misunderstanding. Must we forever persist in bringing such misery while "saving" the rest of the world?

Since the West has inherited and adapted to Christianity, I believe it must be, for our society, the most suitable religion. But is the possibility of world religions toleration and non-interference totally in opposition to the Christian faith?

Perhaps it is - to our traditional interpretations of Christianity, that is. But is it not time we reviewed our old, obdurate opinions? Is it really sacrilege to use our heads? In the end, all who worship, worship the same God. Why should we murder Him?

As college students, we may be broadminded in this problem (though an alarming number of us aren't), but is it not our duty to spread our modern attitudes to those in a position to implement them in world relations. Here is a situation that can only be rectified by the efforts of large numbers of intelligent people. It is time we took a mature, problem-solving approach and made a concrete attempt to find some universally acceptable attitudes to religion and religious toleration, rather than resorting to irresponsible rebellion against an old system that, though out-of date in certain aspects, with some adjustment has great wealth to offer us.

S.P.

Dear Sydney,

It was nice to hear from you again and I was particularly interested in what you had to say concerning B, although I am inclined to think that she is sometimes carried away by her enthusiasm. It may or may not be an original — it is too early to say. The fact that she paid so much for it makes me just a bit suspicious. I would like to see it first before passing judgement, but then, as you say, I am inclined to be overly cautious. If it should prove to be a real find I hope you get the credit for it — as I recall our conversation of last July it was you who first suggested the idea to B and it was also you who figured out where the searching would be most likely to yield results. That, my Sweet, is real scholarship, and I am proud of you. Be careful though not to overdo that kind of thing; one always runs the risk of becoming a mere literary detective at the expense of creative effort. All it ever gets you is Ph. D's and you miss all the fun of doing things even though — perish the thought — you may do them badly. If it comes to that, let B have all the kudos — she's getting to be a pretty dry stick as it is and it may pick her up. It isn't as if you yourself were pressed for time.

Do you remember asking me — it seems years ago but actually it was only last May — whether I thought there might still be some of Sarah's poems kicking around in the West and I told you at the time that I didn't think so because when I did her life in 1948 I was pretty thorough, at least I thought so at the time. There was always the possibility, of course, that something might turn up, but outside of the Binkian collection which had not been properly indexed and classified then, it seemed very unlikely. As it happens I was in Willows about a month ago checking up on that fire which got away from the Canadian Authors Association's picnic when they were boiling coffee on Sarah's grave last Dominion Day. It did some damage to the adjoining farm and everybody, especially John Swivel who was in charge, should have known better than to light a fire in that wind. But I think they made more fuss about it around Willows than it deserved, but because that kind of thing is awfully hard on Canadian literature I was asked to see what I could do about it — public relations and all that as well as paying for the hay. Actually it wasn't too hard — I found that two dollars and two quarts of rye was enough to smooth the whole thing over, but just to make sure I dropped into the office of The Horse Breeders Gazette with another quart and had a chat with the editor. Naturally we got to talking about Sarah since according to him it was all her fault for having herself buried in Willowview Cemetery that started the whole ruckus. And believe it or not he dug around in his desk and brought out a half dozen of Sarah's poems. Three of them had already been published elsewhere — you remember Sarah's habit of trying to collect twice or even more on the same poem — but the other three had never been published. Two of them, rather short, belonged obviously to her early P.R. period and were on a par with *Calf* and *My Garden*. They are historically interesting, the kind of stuff that B would make much of, but I doubt whether they would enhance Sarah's reputation greatly and as far as I am concerned they

need never be published. But the other, *Spring*, is a positive gem and I thought of you at once when it came into my hands after what you had said. I managed to get it with no great trouble. The editor of H.B.G. said he merely kept them as filler, "Just in case I run out of stuff some day," and he was quite willing to trade it for a copy of Joyce Kilmer's *Trees* which I wrote out for him and told him I had just dashed off.

I am enclosing *Spring* and you can publish it or not as you see fit although I think it will be a feather in the cap of the Editor to have a hitherto unpublished Sarah. And if you too, now that you are editor or something, should "just in case run out of stuff" you can always write a line or two of literary criticism to go with it — in fact as far as I am concerned you can publish this whole letter. Nobody reads literary gossip any more anyway and I remember from my days when I was editor of *The Manitoban* how difficult it was to get material. Also, I notice that St. Midget's Quarterly has a literary column although I don't think the stuff that Professor Bedfellow does for it worth reading. He seems to have shot his bolt when he wrote *Seared Land* and hasn't done anything worth while since.

It might be more appropriate for you to reserve *Spring* for your April number but then poetry knows no time or season and there is always the question of its literary significance, a subject which is best pondered during the winter months. I am leaving it to you. You might perhaps work it up into something on which you could pin a sociological study which in turn would have a bearing on the work you are doing in anthropology. I refer, of course, to the tribal custom, or perhaps I should say, the tribal attitude of Saskatchewan towards the arrival of spring and which Sarah's poem so beautifully exemplifies. Spring in Saskatchewan, in case you don't know, having never lived there, is not a season but a day. In Saskatchewan spring is an event like Christmas Day or Fair Day except that it never comes by the calendar — it comes as a complete surprise. Nobody in Saskatchewan ever *expects* spring — he *hopes* for it. It is a matter of faith, not science. And faith there is always justified, — however late. One day they are under four feet of snow and the next day it is midsummer and it between its "spring" Saskatchewan would be glad to celebrate spring's arrival much as the ancient Druids celebrated the arrival of the vernal equinox if only they in Saskatchewan knew when it might turn up and they could catch it on the fly. But Sarah at least has caught the fleeting moment in verse which is perhaps the best that can be hoped for, and in typically Sarah manner she has made something of a symphony of it as she did in *Moonlight on Wascana Lake*. I like particularly her touch in that last line in which she adds her own voice to those of the cow and calf and the sixty-mile wind. There is something positively Wagnerian about her joining in all that noise. I think too her ebullience has carried her away in raising the wind to sixty; most spring zephyrs there hang around fifty.

SPRING (Sarah Binks)

*It's spring again! Who doubts the day's arrival?
Peeps not the thistle from the garden bed?
And shrieks not robin once again the glad survival
Of cut-worm lifting up its vernal head?*

*In swelling chords, full-throated to the weather,
And strong of lung, once more spring voices sway –
Alto and bass, the cow and calf together –
Spring, spring is here, peal out its passing day.*

*I know of nothing that can so elicit,
Such great relief as spring; I know no boon,
That's quite so welcome as the annual visit,
Of spring between the equinox and June.*

*Let voices then lift up in high endeavour,
To greet this day – the robin and the kine,
And add the wind at sixty for full measure,
And one shrill note which happens to be mine!*

I expect to make use of *Spring* in that chapter of *Willows Revisited* that I was telling you about in which I deal with the cow as a *leitmotif* in Saskatchewan literature. And I am not forgetting that it was you who called my attention to the frequent references to milk and butter and cottage cheese and dairy products generally in Bessie Udderton's book, *Vestal Verses*. We are also so accustomed to thinking of Bessie as the poet of "Innerness" that we overlook her Saskatchewan complex. Its all indirect, of course, but more interesting on that account. I might have overlooked it if it hadn't been for you, but then, as I said, you are becoming a real scholar, and you deserve more than a footnote.

Remember me to B if you see her although she will probably write me. I expect to get in again before long, and if I do, I'll give you a buzz and we can have lunch together.

yours,
Paul Hiebert*

*Dr. Hiebert, best known as author of SARAH BINKS, a satire directed against the over-serious literary scholar, graduated from the University of Manitoba, took his M.A. at Toronto and his Ph.D. at McGill. Eventually he returned to 'peg where he was Professor of Chemistry and Physics at the University of Manitoba for some years.

I extend sincere congratulations to Miss Sydney Porter and staff of *Vox Creative Quarterly*, the first literary issue since 1946, for the enthusiasm, care and zeal that they have shown in its production.

As editor of the College yearbook, *Vox*, for 1964 I feel that this first publication of contributions by students, professors, and alumni will serve as an incentive for further open expression of the self. This first issue has shown an effort to push outwards the periphery of undergraduate knowledge of, or at least intuition of, the underlying "significance of humanity".

Now that a path has been cleared, before lies a fresh world, a channel very different. How we shall continue on this path, what we shall do with it or what it will do to us, will depend on us, the undergraduates of United College. I hope for good luck, which is chiefly sincere endeavor, co-operation and hard work.

Edd J. Shepell,
Vox Editor, 1964.



A WORD ON THE WHY'S, HOW'S AND WHAT'S OF WRITING

By Mr. R. C. Stewart
(*Lecturer in English*)

"But you are a little unclear in the main perception if you fail to see that you need neither rhyme nor reason for writing."

"What do I need, then reading and 'rithmetic?"

"Exactly. And never forget that 'rithmetic comes first. If you live on a great prairie, however, you may have to let reading come first in order ever to get word of the 'rithmetic."

"Pure madness. But your point, if you don't mind."

"Well, it is this. Writing, like arithmetic, is the echo of an incantation, of the song the universe sings as it measures its meaning. That song the sea sings loudest, and the men who live by the sea learn to hear it with their blood. On the prairie you can listen to the sea in the shells exported by those near a shore, those who have heard the sea itself."

"I think it may be time to get the shell out of here. What in the name of prudence is this gibberish you are muttering? Talk North American, or forget the whole business. What shells do you mean?"

"I intend the shells to be a metaphor for the poems and stories you must read to get rhythm in your blood when you do not live by the sea. Please endeavor to understand it, because, after rhythm—the very heart of the matter—metaphor is the most vital part of genuine writing. It may be said to be the rest of its body, including the brain. Rhythm, metaphor—for the rest you are as free as air."

"*Hot* might have been a better adjective for air at this juncture. I see I will not make exactly a fortune by following the advice I am likely to get from you."

"Oh, I have misunderstood, and beg your pardon. Writers, of course, make stories, not fortunes. But for the latter, if you have time I can demonstrate to you an inexpensive press....Just one minute, I say here. Do you have change for a nine?"

BOOK REVIEW

"A Separate Person"

by A. D. Longman

Instructor Emeritus in English

In the fourth year of Hitler's war, at a coffee table in Tony's basement-restaurant, a 15-year-old evacuee from threatened London expressed the hope that she might some day become Great Britain's first woman prime minister. To her listeners the idea may not have seemed wholly fantastic. However, the perilous national crisis which had so recently brought Winston Churchill to 10 Downing Street, the traditional strength of the Establishment, and the brevity of the mere three decades since Emmeline Pankhurst and her associates had sought to convince the nation that women had capacities and responsibilities for full citizenship, suggested the improbability of an immediate or early realization of Elizabeth Anne Holland's dream.

Elizabeth, who had spent five years of her childhood in India, had left her home in the Buchingham Gate region of London and with many hundreds of other children made the hurried and hazardous crossing of the Atlantic before Nazis could invade or bombs could fall. She came to an area where relatives dwelt, Winnipeg and a farming area on the city's outskirts.

Vivid memories of her ideas and personality must remain with most United College teachers and students who knew her. Some will remember the semi-consternation she caused in Sparling Hall by introducing white rats from a neighboring pet shop; others will recall her decisive manner as chairman of the debating committee and her keenness as a participant in its debates; someone who wrote the thumb-nail sketch opposite her picture in the Year Book referred to her as "intellectual and flippant" and commented, "Pooh" leads a comparatively quiet life." A glance at the records of 1943 throw light upon the variety and excellence of her participation in both basic and ancillary facets of college life. Both the Collegiate Year Book, TRIC-TICS, and the Collegiate Graduation programme of that year bear witness to such achievement. She received a Recognition of Merit for the Year's highest academic standing in Grade XI, membership in the Collegiate Honors Society which requires a minimum average mark of 75%, an Executive Certificate for student organizations work, and a Youth Leadership Training Certificate. In her Department of Education Grade XI examinations in June Miss Holland achieved an average of 92.4% and won an Isbister Scholarship.

Through the fortuitous meeting of Elizabeth Holland at Edinburgh University by Dr. James Dale of the United College English Department, we learned that she had in 1962 published her first novel. The prime ministership may

not as yet have opened its doors to her, but the publishing house bearing the distinguished name of a prime minister who has recently retired from office and re-associated himself with Macmillan and Company Limited has published her book, "A Separate Person." *The title – and perhaps the theme – is an echo from Walt Whitman's short poem of 1867, "One's-self I sing, a simple separate person." Reportedly, a second novel by Miss Holland has recently been published.

The 248-page story is set almost wholly within the territorial bounds of the author's western Canadian war-time experiences, encompassing Winnipeg and environs, and adjacent community, and brief side trips to such places

environs, and adjacent farm community, and brief side trips to such places as Winnipeg Beach and the Lake of the Woods. Reserving the creative artist's right to amend, embellish, or conceal the identity of characters, places or episodes, Miss Holland makes her readers vaguely aware of familiarity with types, setting and experiences depicted. She avoids the documentary element which one might have expected in a novel written in a post-war period by a person whose life was dislocated by the crises. The principal character portrayed by "Peggy", the Separate Person, is no doubt at least partially autobiographical. The novelist reveals much of the same energy, zest and imagination which she exhibited so compellingly as a school girl. Her observations and judgments reveal the discernment and sensitivities of an intelligent teenager who has had her capacities for communication sharpened by maturity.

* A SEPARATE PERSON: Elizabeth Holland; Macmillan and Company Ltd., London; pp. 248; 1962.



STUDENT ESSAY - ENGLISH 201

by Johanna Burns

"In the General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer achieves his satiric effects largely through innuendo and ironic commendation."

In the general prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer contrives with the utmost good humor to damn his characters with faint praise, with extravagant praise, or by the use of innuendo. These devices are effectively employed in the portraits of his ecclesiastical pilgrims, the Prioress, the Monk, the Friar, and the Summoner. These four have been chosen for the purpose of illustrating the broad spectrum of satire wherein ironic commendation and innuendo are found.

In his description of the Prioress, Chaucer maintains a tone of evasiveness regarding his subject's character, and in this manner creates the impression that the lady's principles require a shield of some sort. For instance, Chaucer innocently notes that her smile is very modest. Considering the austere and solemn bearing expected from women of the medieval Church, the reader is tempted to wonder why she is smiling at all . . . particularly in the second line of description. This, together with her presence among the pilgrims, lends the Prioress an air of light-heartedness. Chaucer hastily proceeds to comment on her skill in singing divine service but then abandons his attempt to describe her as an ecclesiastic. There follows a gentle satire on a class of women, the new-rich, who diligently imitate what they assume to be the manners of the Court. Because it is fashionable to do so, the Prioress speaks French fluently, but with the accent of a London suburb. Her table manners elicit a great deal of praise from Chaucer and he elaborates on them until they become rather ludicrous. Similarly, he comments on her tenderheartedness and the reader would be willing to count this a positive virtue until the picture emerges of the Prioress doting fatuously on her lap-dogs and weeping over trapped mice. There is a possible indication that her pets are better fed than the poor people for whom she is supposed to be concerned.

As Chaucer continues with her physical description, the Prioress withdraws once more to an ambiguous status. Her wide, bare forehead, her soft, red mouth, are hardly the attributes one would expect to be noticed in a nun; nor does it seem proper to describe her as a fine figure of a woman. If the question arises at the beginning of the passage as to what sort of a Prioress she is, it may be partly answered here. To remind us of her religious vocation, Chaucer faithfully describes her rosary. But why is she wearing it on her arm? The strongest link between this mysterious lady and the other ecclesiastics satirized in the general prologue is her brooch with its perplexing inscription. I

In forty-four lines of superficial description, Chaucer has said nothing concerning the Prioress' character, except for traits that she has adopted under the dictates of fashion and social rank. Throughout, he appears to be leaving much unsaid, and in so doing he has created remarkable tension in this passage.

Perhaps some light could be shed upon this enigmatic person by the following description of the Monk. Here again, Chaucer never drops his attitude of praise, although at times his tolerance becomes somewhat strained. There is some shock value in the opening lines for the Monk is said to be an excellent monk "that lovede venerye."² The incongruity is enhanced by the following line, "A manly man, to been an abbot able,"³ contrasting this worldly, earth-bound fellow with his religious office. It cannot be ascertained whether there is a double meaning intended in the word "venerye." If there is, line 167 then serves the purpose of underscoring the innuendo. Chaucer proceeds with the contrast between this monk and monks as they are supposed to be, thus developing the satire by means of ironic commendation. The sound of chapel bells can scarcely be heard above the jingling of the bridle. The Monk belongs to the strict order of St. Benedict. He is a hail-fellow-well-met, and modern in his views, not a pale scholar of the cloister. He is well-dressed and sleek with good living. He pursues his passion for hunting with no care for the expense. Chaucer expresses admiration of the Monk's dogs and horses, leaving the reader to wonder where Monk derives his income.

This passage refers back to the description of the Prioress, for the Monk also wears a brooch, this one in the shape of a love-knot. Chaucer discreetly side-steps this ambiguity and exclaims, "Now certainly he was a fair prelaat!"⁴ He closes with a comment on the Monk's love of fat swans, for the Benedictines were traditionally vegetarians.

With the addition of Friar Huberd to the expedition the reader notices that the satirical spectrum is growing darker. This description is developed in the same manner as that of the Monk, with contrast and ironic commendation, only innuendo is more often employed.

The Friar is a roistering fellow, a confessor, and an important man. The reader is left to reconcile these aspects as best he can. In all four orders, no friar is as knowledgeable in dalliance. "Dalliaunce" could mean gossip in this case, but the following lines cause the reader to wonder at the Friar's eagerness to marry off the young women of his acquaintance. In any case, the Friar's morals come into question. Chaucer's remark that the Friar was a pillar of his order could be construed as sarcasm directed either toward the ecclesiastic or the order. The Friar's privilege of giving absolution arouses some indignation in the poet, for if the Friar is easy to confess to, the explanation is implied . . . why shouldn't he be? It's quite likely that both confessor and penitent are laughing up their sleeves. At this point mention is made of the Friar's carrying trinkets to give to good-looking matrons and the reader is reminded of the Friar's inexplicable enthusiasm about marriage.

Having established Huberd's character, Chaucer resumes his tone of commendation, to wit: why should this worthy friar associate with beggars and lepers when it is far more profitable to seek the acquaintance of the rich? A crowning piece of irony is inserted here. "Ther has no man nowher so vertuuous."⁵ Chaucer continues to praise the success of the ecclesiastical bon-vivant in his social climbing, his begging from the poor, and his fine taste in expensive clothes.

With the Summoner, Chaucer's satire has almost crossed the boundary that separates it from outright condemnation and becomes satire of a heavy-handed sort such as Juvenal might have employed in his attack on Roman mores. But Chaucer never becomes bitter. Even in his mordant description of the Summoner he retains the use of ironic commendation and hints at things that are better left unstated.

The poet begins with the Summoner's physical description in such a manner that, without any reference to the man's character, the reader finds him thoroughly disgusting. His sores, his unseemly sexual proclivities, his drunkenness, all give the impression that such a man must be evil. In the fact that

the Summoner's disease is incurable there is a connotation that he is damned. Having created this repellent character, Chaucer compliments him; "He was a gentil harlot and a kynde."⁶ In fact, Chaucer points out, he was such a good fellow that for a small bribe he would allow an ecclesiastic to keep a mistress. He also encouraged his friends to defy the threat of excommunication.

The particularly awesome office Chaucer has ascribed to this character seems to imply some defect in the Church itself and at no point does Chaucer come closer to questioning the integrity of that institution. In lines 659 to 661 he inserts what may be construed as a doubt whether excommunication is an effectual preventative when the morals of the clergy are dubious. In the light of Chaucer's tolerance and humanity it would appear that it is not the wayward clergy he wants to condemn, but the ecclesiastical laws that gives scoundrels power over the unsophisticated and permits the abuse of innocence. This would explain the following lines wherein the young people of the parish are bound to the Summoner's whim. Perhaps in his kindly way he had seduced them in the same manner as he had his fellow clerics, no doubt for the purpose of increasing his source of bribes. "A bettre felawe sholde men nought fynde."⁷ Recovering from his indignation, Chaucer decorated him with outlandish gear and elevates him to the status of a fool.

Having found words of commendation for these characters and exposed their faults by partly shielding them, Chaucer has depicted his ecclesiastics gradually ascending the scale of amorality, beginning with the elegant Prioress up to the Summoner who emerges with cake and garland, like the protagonist of a nightmare.

NOTES

1 A.W. Hoffman, "Chaucer's Prologue to Pilgrimage; Two Voices," Chaucer Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Edward Wagenknecht (New York, 1959, pp. 33, 34, 36.

2 Geoffrey Chaucer, Canterbury Tales, ed. Robert D. French, New York, 1948 p. 5, line 164.

3 Ibid., p. 5, line 165

4 Ibid., p. 6, line 204

5 Ibid., p. 8, line 251

6 Ibid., p. 19, line 647

7 Ibid., p. 19, line 648

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ODE TO OBLIVION

Unawareness is our legacy –
The inheritors of the brave land of the buffalo.
We have betrayed the very life
That once made us nearly great.

Hours from Europe and centuries from nowhere . . .
Hundred watt stereo sets faithfully
Reproduce old train whistles;
Television shows the eclipse of the sun,
Toothpaste and the Mafia on trial.

“Don’t hurry dear
Let’s wait till the silly Overture’s finished
So I can make a grand entrance.”

“You silly creature! – observing Epiphany?
It’s Bay Day!”

Happiness is a late movie without commercials.
Damn the Blue Bombers anyway!

Oblivion makes the world go round
World go round
World go round
Let’s have another party.

The William Avenue aristocrats
Are zoning out our culture.
The ladies of the Symphony Committee are pouring tea
While Bruno Walter dies in the middle of winter.

“Did you like to Ballet?
I don’t know, I haven’t read Winters yet.”

We are all carpet baggers;
Even Miller cannot make us worthy of tragedy.
Welcome us, brave new world
We are worthy of you.

The sun has grown weary of shining
On the ever-blah,
and night has finally closed
Upon the already-dark.

Stay in your mountain isolation, Zarathustra;
You torture our atrophied minds.
See how comfortable it is in the shadows,
Surrounded by the sweet decay of opium.

FLEETING THOUGHT OF A MISOGYNIST

Stupid is he bound by a woman's vow,
Who only desires his spirit to bow
Before her unyielding, cunning notion,
Slyly subtle like a devil's potion.
How so utterly vain in feeling,
Is a harsh heart in a baseless being!

Hurricane of wrath I spit scorn on thee;
Empty thou art and empty wilt ever be;
Oh Femme fatale I call thee rotten mess,
And bearer of woe in an angel's dress.
Evil Mind behind transparent fan,
Never hope to vanquish greater man!

Dan Simcoff

DISILLUSIONMENT

The work and toil of everyday life;
The sweat and tears of unending strife;
Are for what?
Bacchian laughter and silly gladness,
Sorrow born from dark Labour's madness;
All for naught!

The golden road of the idealist state
Will ne'er be treaded by stooped human gait;
Or vain hope!
Let silvery threads pattern our dreams,
But keep airy thoughts from earthly schemes;
Learn to cope!

From his peak Ignorance must be hurled,
No room for fancy in a realistic world;
Oh deceit!
In misplaced hope and an upturned eye,
Is found dashed faith torn with the anguished cry
Of defeat.

Dan Simcoff

Why
must I be here
alone
useless
in such a state of weakness
 overpowered
 by
 man?

Does he have the right
to
watch
touch
 and hurt
 and kill?

Once
I was happy
with
friends
and all that nature offered
 protection
 freedom
 and life.

Sometimes I cry
then
whimper
choke
 from loneliness
 from fear.

But
what does he care
as
long
as he is free
 content
 with
 himself.

So, maybe tomorrow
or
the
next
 he will come
 I will go.

THE VISIONARY

I know where I've been
Because I've been there.
I know where I am
Because I'm here
But where I'm going
Is kind of hard to tell.
I guess I'll sit
And have another beer.

by Ian Parker

E.J.S.

SAND CASTLES

"It can often be profitable," said the old man,
"To build sand castles in your mind
Out of air." And the young man listened,
Secure in the knowledge of what is
And above worrying about what might be
And nodded and thought, "Old man,
Those grains of sand must have stopped the gears
In your think-machine," and smiled inwardly.

And the old man knew that he thought this
And he too smiled inwardly — for he has seen war
And he had seen raw hate
And fear
And lies
And cowards dying many times
And he knew, that what is
Is often not all that it is cut out to be
And that sand castles in the mind made of air
Can be a better what is than what is.

by Ian Parker

THE HORROR

You wonder what men felt at Dachau
And you feel the sweat on their palms
And the nerves like violin-strings
Tightened too much
And the pain just behind the eyes
That watered unbidden at the truths they saw;
All this you feel.
But you can't feel the one thing
That made Dachau Dachau, buddy—
You can't feel what it was to be
Absolutely, irrevocably, irretrievably
Alone.

by Ian Parker

OF EXISTENCE AND LIFE

Life, mud, muck, mire,
Cannot kindle my desire.
Grey light. Dark night.
Inner turmoil, conflict, flight.
Love must sicken and decay;
Laws of Nature all obey.

ON GREED

The birds did not my coming shriek,
For night had swallowed up their eyes.
The trees were passive to my agony
As 'round the native camp I stole,
Unnoticed,
Past thatch and pole.

The men around the fire in council were,
While women in the shadows sat.
A pungent, foreign smoke that in my lungs did burn
Warned me that burning flesh could smell like that.

Into the Shaman's sacred hut I crawled,
Beheld the altar,
Gasped to see my prize so near.
Two dazzling sapphire eyes in trance held me.

I knew the idol filled with gold
From legends everlasting;
Forsook my past and risked my life
To realize my obsession.

Once in search, could not turn back,
'Twas life or prize possession –
Sacrifice or gain.
At last I lunged – to win or lose.

And only then did feel a million tiny points burning the hand that idol held.

The poison in my soul with anger raged.
Two sapphires watched with pity.
A madness came and went like dawn and dusk,
With neither day nor night between.

In my clouded vertigo the jeering of the tribe I heard,
Saw a hundred glaring eyes that knew the secret,
A hundred eyes that watched a glutton die a glutton's death.

spark, Flicker, Flame, FIRE!
My heart is bursting with desire!
Sparkling, flashing, glistening, gay,
Dauntless am I come what may.
Fearless, daring, bold and brave,
Nature's precious life I crave.
No more in darkness will I hide,
The priceless secret now espied.

by d.g.

by d.g.

REFLECTIONS IN A GRAIN OFFICE

Files -
Aberdeen to Eyebrow.
Order!
Filmore to Rush lake,
St. Benedict to Zennon Park.

Prairie towns bow obsequiously to my finger-tips
Like their wheat before the wind.

Aberdeen to Zennon Park,
My Alpha and Omega.
Immuted between threatening rows of filing cases
I die; or worse,
Conceived in Aberdeen
And nourished in Fir Mountain
I am thrust, Babbitt-born,
Upon some stilted prairie town.
Subsistence begins at Zennon Park.

Joseph Max

DREAMS

Dreams!
Pictures in Technicolor,
Moving across the Mind.
Keeping alive
That which has gone.

Dreams!
Colour Slides in motion,
Fluid and liquid.
Moving onward
To things to come.

Nico Vander Stoel

GLIMPSES

A corner of a street,
Veiled in greyish sleet.

A dirty old car,
A broken paint jar.

A streetcar squeaking,
A garbage pail reeking.

A girl and a boy,
Searching for joy.

Grey-Tinted faces,
Awkward embraces.

A corner of a street,
veiled in decay and sleet.

Nico Vander Stoel

THE DOOR

What is there left now? Only
Hurt; only Pain and Resentment.
That door now presents itself to be opened?
That black door – to disillusionment; to broken promises.

That most famous door, that is always
Present. Always! Does it ever close?
Never! Lonely, desolate, degraded
Men and women walk silently through
Slowly. Slowly; their steps echo, and
Echo, and yet re-echo, through all time.
Why are they here? Why am i among them?

Because life no longer has meaning
Except for those fools who still believe, who
Hope. And what is hope? What is it but
Pain, behind a cruel mask of sunlight?
And so we are back to Pain, that
Ever present crutch of devils, that –
And so if i walk through that door
What will it matter – what will it
Matter that never again will i walk
Back – back to that mask of sunlight
Back to be hurt, to be laughed at?
Nothing! It matters nothing! To no
One! – least of all to me.

by Lynne Smith

SIMPLICITY IN THE UNIVERSE

to love, flicker, be no more
silence; that's all nothing more
dear god the very stars rush
to thee and i, am dead.
crystals suspend time in
a timeless absolute
and i, alas, am quits.

Albert Collignon

WHO AM I?

Why do I wander
Alone across this world,
Neither questioning
Nor answering?
What purpose for my being
I ask the Lord - -
No answer do I hear.
For in myself the answer lies;
In myself.
But, who am I?
In my own world
Can't I be anyone?
A queen, a princess
A doctor, a lawyer;
But, I must be someone,
Who am I?

QUESTION FROM A SCARRED SOUL

Anonymous

Can the loss of innocence
Be compensated for
By the integrity which my heart professes?

Hypocrisy doubles the sin
And only honesty saves me
From the depths of the
Bottomless abyss that is life!

Sandra Tanbard

MY LOST LOVE

I searched the world
Until I found it,
But away from me
It has flown;
It cannot be pinned
On velvet black,
It must be free
To roam and wander
In our hearts.
But now it's gone.
And once again I search - -
Breaking hearts,
Leaving ruin
Where'er my travels take me.
And it finds me not.

Anonymous



BRONCHIAL ENLIGHTENMENT IGNORED

by Jim Foster

Cough-pain cuts my lung gives me lovely fever lifts me from my body to
enveloping walls of pictured paint around. Fever crystallised colour clear.
Creation creates.

Do you feel the force furrowing crevices in the mind that cannot be filled
or crossed by anything normal even if all eternity is used or that you know
everything is all right something will happen and you cannot lose well Jesus
like last week when basement sex on worn chesterfield free beer long cigar-
ette ashes white on black floor curled.

YOU live but one life in only one time, useless, incapable of soul union
desired. Place in me your self and live in me for all time. I place little hope
in others

Yes I too have wino-visions now. But I did embrace metallic mannequins
and still I have visions now. Of pablum breasts of hands detergent white-
smooth dead in their perfectness of joyless lovemaking for I see now the
worthless around me.

Visions of disorder alone give me comfort . . . must we be perfect must
we be beautifully alike and all perish alike in the sterile sparkling hallways
of antiseptic sex, in chemical relief emotionless? Let us make some show of
our feelings and distinguish ourselves from each other living love singular
and bold.

ARISE let us go now angry sweating armed with scissors to snip off
buttons here and there joyfully, for one hair displaced threatens the mecha-
nical marvel that is humanity.

For what will happen when they blend into the pattern of the wallpaper
become but an ornament of their own houses, something to be admired compli-
mented envied by some great unseen eye as if it gave a good healthy damn?
WHAT, when they can no longer distinguish themselves from the things they
have made becoming their own proudest possessions, something to be looked
at but not touched, something with a glass sticker.

ARISE NOW let us scuff our shoes let us darken the air of the suburbs
with dust and ashes. Free the GRASS BLADES, let my people grow from their
cement prisons. We will prick their noses with GRASS BLADES and the

blood in their mouths will tell them they are still human. REVIVE the fleshy redness lost to well oiled artificiality . . . spit on hot suburbs' sidewalks, urinate in shopping center parking lots, welcome spiders and mice and other strange creatures in through the front door smiling.

We will win (destroy the canopeners) and there will only be a few left living in the world, there will be air for all, for when the rows of houses are staggered they will be confronted with mud and grass, they will see stones and mud mud mud. All hail Disorder herald of freedom all hail Disorder the visions in the skull command.

“no”!

STAY THEN DAMN YOU and copulate with your cellophane wrapped masturbators, but remember there will be no life-song at your death only the slow hiss of escaping gases . . . the deflating of a stale balloon.

I will leave you to your fate while I go to seek my own, far better I think than that.

THE CHANGE

by Ross McLennan

The rain hit the glass and ran down and made the street lights wavy. Jacky liked the sound of the rain against the window and the way it made everything blacker outside. He liked the thin way the drops carried the lights from the outside down to the bottom of the window. He liked the way the headlights of cars could suddenly glare fuzzily from the window and then sweep across the glass as the cars would make the corner, and the swish of the cars going through puddles. Most of all he liked being alone when it rained because then he could listen and watch and think to himself whatever he wanted the rain to make him think. If someone else was with him, he'd have to listen to him and he wouldn't see the wavy lights and hear the pleasant sound of the cars going by and see their fuzzy headlights. The rain wouldn't matter that way.

Jacky was left alone in the store almost every day half an hour before closing time. His father had to get to the liquor commission before it closed. He never told the boy, but they both knew.

Jacky sat on the stool beside the cash register and stared at the window and gradually, even though his eyes were open and he could see, he began to feel as if he were asleep. It was a wonderful feeling. And then his eyes did begin to close, his head sinking down to the counter. There was silence and the quiet rain.

The jingle of the little bell and the door crashed open. Jacky looked up with a fast heart and not seeing for a moment.

"Hey kid, its a lousy night out."

Jacky blinked and saw the customer standing in front of him on the other side of the counter. He was a young man wearing a jacket soaked through with the rain. Jacky nodded.

"You're lucky you can stay in here where its dry", said the young man. He leaned forward on the counter. "You got a small Players?"

The boy jumped off the stool and handed the man the cigarettes.

"Forty cents, please," he said.

"Yeah." The young man fingered through the change and dropped it on the counter. "There you go, kid." He watched the boy ring the sale up on the cash register and climb back onto the stool. "Yeah, a lousy night." He opened the cigarette package. His fingers shook.

Jacky pushed an ashtray over to him and the young man dropped the cellophane wrapper into it. He flashed a quick smile.

"Thanks. Nothing like bein' neat, eh kid?" He put a cigarette in his mouth and searched for a match. "Damn. No matches." Jacky slid a package of matches across the counter. "Thanks, boy . . . free?"

Jacky smiled and nodded. The young man lit his smoke. He walked over to the window and looked out.

Jeeze what a night. Rainy . . ." He turned, "And windy?" say, do you mind if I finish my smoke in here? Dry off a little."

"Sure", said Jacky.

"Thanks." The young man glanced out of the window again and returned to the counter.

"My name's Sam Smith. What's yours?"

"Jacky . . . Burke."

Smith shrugged his shoulders. "I figure since I'll be here a couple minutes, we might as well know each other's names."

He began to shake and cough quite harshly. The boy looked at him, startled.

"Its okay...kid...just...just this cigarette." He cleared his throat. "Not supposed to smoke really."

Smith looked around the small store.

"You alone here, kid?"

Smith's. My father had to...go home. My mother's sick."

Smith raised his eyebrows. "That so? Too bad, too bad." He took a deep drag on his cigarette. "Another nail in the coffin, eh?"

He looked around the store again. In the corner to Jacky's left, at the back of the store, was a small safe, its door open.

"You make much money here, Jack?" He said quickly, "I didn't mean to be nosey, kid".

"Its okay", Jacky replied. "We make enough to get by on. Least that's what Dad always says."

"Yeah, well its always good to be in your own business, be your own boss. Course now Jack, its better not to be the boss and still have a job, than not to have no job at all." He leaned forward on the counter and looked up at the boy with his eyes. His face was looking at the counter. "Me? I'm my own boss, just like your old man. Yeah." His face snapped up and he looked straight at Jacky. "Only I've got no job, but your old man has." He snapped his fingers and turned around and leaned against the counter.

He began walking around the front of the store talking out loud, but more to himself than to Jacky. That is how it seemed to Jacky, who didn't like hearing what Smith was saying, because he himself would never say such things about himself to someone he hardly knew.

"Oh, I make some money here and there you know. But it comes down to makin' nothin'. Nothin'. I was always told I'd be nothin' when I grew up. Everybody said that. My old man, my mother. As if they were anythin'". He was near the counter. "Anythin' at all, I mighta listened to him!" He slapped the face of the counter. "The world's one bastard".

For a moment there was silence. Jacky cleared his throat. Smith stretched out his arms. "Its a nice little place." He dropped his arms and looked over at the safe, the door still open. "Man, with a safe like that you must have more money than a bank, eh?"

Jacky laughed. "Dad doesn't just keep money in there. There's papers and stuff too."

Smith shook his arms. "Still pretty wet." He leaned on the counter. "Yeah, safe's usually mean a lot of money." He looked up at Jacky on the stool. "How come you're sittin' there -- by the cash register? Guardin' the money?"

"No, I - ".

"Sure, money's got to be guarded by the people who have it against the people that don't. Only your old man's kinda stupid to leave just a kid to guard his dough."

Jacky took the key to the cash register from his pocket. The man glanced out the window.

"Guess you'll be lockin' up soon, eh?"

Jacky reached over to lock the cash register. The key fell from his hand to the counter.

"I'll get it", the man said.

"No, I'll -".

Smith grabbed the key.

"Pretty important key."

Jacky reached for it, but Smith closed his fist on it. There was a glistening spot on his forehead.

"Yeah, an important key. Anybody who had this could get into the cash register and take all the money." He smiled and held out the key. "But there's not much in there, is there?"

Jacky reached for the key. And looked into Smith's eyes.

They started for the safe at the same time. The boy leaping off the stool and scrambling down one side of the counter. The man running down the other. The safe was directly in front of the boy. But it seemed to take so long to get there. Jacky reached the end of the counter just before Smith. He saw the man out of the corner of his eye. Smith made a grab for the boy. Jacky twisted away. He lost his balance and began to fall. Smith grabbed at the boy again, clipping him hard against the ribs. Jacky's right shoulder smashed into the door as he spun into the safe. The door slammed shut. Jacky reached up and twisted the dial.

The boy looked up at Smith. The man stood looking at the safe. He was breathing very heavily. He put his hands on his stomach and looked at the boy.

"What's Open the safe."

Jacky shook his head.

"What's the combination?"

Jacky shook his head. His shoulder began to ache.

Smith squatted down in front of the boy. His brow glistened with great drops of sweat.

"Look . . . kid . . . don't give me any crap about not knowin' the combination. I been here before. I know you know. I heard your old man once askin' you if you remembered the combination. I been here before. You said you did."

Jacky's shoulder sent pains down his arm. He didn't understand.

"Did . . . what?"

"Know the goddam combination!"

Smith looked quickly at the window and back at Jacky. He sank to his knees.

"Tell me the combination, boy, or open the safe."

There was silence. They looked at each other. Smith grabbed the front of Jacky's shirt and hoisted the boy to his feet.

"I want the money", he said. "I got no job. Maybe there's not much in there, but its probably more than I can make. An easier way of gettin' it than bustin' a gut on some lousy job."

He grunted and thrust the boy down. "The numbers, kid."

Jacky closed his eyes. The shoulder had become an agonizing pain.

"The numbers!" Smith grabbed Jacky's shoulder and shook him.

"No! No! Leave me! Go away! Get out! Get out! Get out! Get -".

Smith's hand smashed across the boy's face.

"Shut up!"

The lights of a passing car swept across the window. Smith looked up and started for the front of the store.

"Stop crying! Shut up!" He swept a row of cans off a shelf. "God damn you, shut up!"

He ran over to the cash register.

"I'll get this first."

He reached around the cash register and punched a key. The drawer sprung open with a ring.

"Get out."

It was the boy. He stood in the middle of the toppled canned goods. He held a tin in each hand. His face and lips were white. He raised his left arm.

"Get out."

Smith started towards the boy.

"Jesus - ".

The boy hurled the tin. It smashed through the front window. A high, harsh steady alarm sounded. Smith jerked around and looked at the window. He turned and looked in disbelief at Jacky. The second tin flew past him and crashed through the glass door. Smith turned wildly in a circle, the alarm screaming into his ears. He threw his arms up with a loud sob and jerked open the door. The little bell jingled noiselessly. The door crashed shut with a shower of glass.

Jacky turned and went over to the safe. He reached up and flicked a switch. The alarm stopped.

He walked slowly to the front of the store and stood staring out of the window. Great gusts of cold dark rain swept through the broken window into the little store and beat against Jacky's face. The street light gleamed harshly in the air and darkly on the pavement. The puddles were like black tar. There were no cars.

Jacky heard someone coming and was glad.

A man appeared. He stopped, framed in the star of the broken window.

“What happened here?” he asked. He stepped carefully through the broken window. “I heard a crash and a ringing”.

He looked down at Jacky.

“What happened?”

Jacky looked past the man. “Something happened fast”, he said.

“What, boy?”, asked the man. “What?”

Jacky looked at the man’s face.

“I don’t know”, he said. He looked down at his shoulder. “My shoulder hurts”. He started to cry very softly.

“Don’t cry, son”, said the man, “We’ll get your shoulder fixed. ”

Jacky stopped crying.

“I’m all right”, he said.

“But this place . . . Look at the door and the window . . .”.

Jacky looked through the window.

“Its just a window”, he said.

THE ABYSS OF LIFE

by Ray M. Shrofel

The alley was dark as he stumbled through it, following its windings behind those huge structures belonging to an era long gone. Narrow winding stairways, cluttered with garbage cans filled to overflowing, around which flies gradually descended in a dense unsavory fog from the heights of those rotting ruins. High overhead a motley array of clothes and grey diapers hung dripping. The water from this sodden mass wet the alley floor making it slippery.

He continued to slide over the roadway and over the rubble strewn across the darkness as if to prevent his passage. Only now and then did he look up to make sure that that tiny patch of sky was still there as if its disappearance from the top of the converging walls had some ominous meaning. Stumbling, he fell against the wall and instantly recoiled. Never before had he felt anything so clammy and so wet. The stone seemed to ooze water that was not water but a sticky, greasy substance that seemed to be the life blood dripping from those walls.

Hark! a cry was heard echoing as it splashed back and forth between those soggy, seeping walls. It was a high piercing, animal cry, a strange cry, a frightened cry that issued from deep within his bowels; a cry issued from lips as dry as those walls were wet. He stopped. Cringing in a corner, he glanced up to make sure that patch of sky, so infinite, was still there; as if its passing would be his passing. Hallo? the sound of many feet could be heard padding through the winding, twisting tunnels of that alley; feet being driven by a purpose, but what a purpose.

A light speck in the distance reflected in a grimy puddle seemed his last hope. Closer and closer came that speck of light as did the horrid sound of many feet scraping over the cobbles. The light became larger; it became a door with frosted glass and one broken window-pane and a steel mesh over it. It became another adversary until he noticed a crack, only a crack but just enough space to squeeze through in desperation. Quickly now, over the threshold worn by the thousands of boots which had crossed it into the lights. The glaring lights which made blurred figures after the black darkness of the alley. As his eyes grew accustomed to the light of many bare bulbs overhead, he recognized his surroundings. A tavern, a friendly tavern where he could receive sanctuary and sympathy. To the right, a fat man with many rolling chins and small beady eyes and a bald head was wiping the spilled beer of

a drunkard who had passed out on the bar, and swatting flies with his free hand. In the darkness to the left, the sound of many men and women happily carousing over a few more beers could be heard. Among them he would find safety.

Suddenly, behind him in the darkness, a woman screamed as he brushed quickly against her leg. She leaped to her feet spilling the contents of her glass down the front of her dress. A man eager to be of assistance threw the empty glass at him. Suddenly the room was in an uproar as dirty bodies sluggishly struggled from their chairs to join in the chase. Calloused hands were uplifted. All rose in one mass to rid themselves of the intruder. He was at a loss and as he ran to the door, he could smell the odor of death on the breath of those who had chased him through the winding alley. He thought, it is better to pass from the abyss of life at the hands of enemies than to be maimed by those who were the only hope.

So it was that he chose to die at the hands of the cats, even though they used him miserably. Even as his flesh was being torn, he could hear the sound of laughter in the air and see the darkness closing over the rooftops high above. How does a rat exist in a city where both man and beast are its enemies.

A CANADIAN FLAG?

by Ray M. Shrofel

A flag is a piece of cloth or bunting representing a country. Although it is honored by all people and during times of war these same people are willing to die for its glory. This suggests that a flag plays an important part in the life of a country. On a country's flag are the symbols and colors that distinguish it from all the other nations of the world. Every country has a flag to represent it: the United States', "Stars And Stripes", France's, "Tri-color", Britain's "Union Jack," and Canada's, "..... ."

Canada, country without a flag, Canada, a nation free from oppressive forces yet over-shadowed by the spectre of the once powerful English. Canada may be in its rightful position because a colony never has its own colors. Instead it is given an adapted version of those of the mother country. A nation without a flag is akin to a baby's diaper; it doesn't stay together when it is missing something.

Canada is a land of opportunity, a haven where the homeless can start a new life free from the oppressions of dictatorships. People who arrive in a strange country with nothing more than the shirt on their back should be assimilated into the society of that country. In Canada this is not true. New Canadians find no symbols with which they can identify themselves. Instead of integrating, they cling to their native tongue and to their familiar customs. To help them to feel truly Canadian, we must offer them a flag; a flag that will identify THEM with THEIR country.

Still another thorn in Canada's side is the separatist movement led by the Canadians in Quebec. Ever since General Wolfe led the British troops up the cliffs of the Plains of Abraham, the French-speaking population in Quebec have been treated as the "conquered". Even Confederation could not create for them a status above that of slaves. Now they are fighting for isolation as a separate state. Canadians cannot exist as part of a unified country until they have a flag that will symbolize their country.

Not only the French-speaking populace need feel discriminated against. During the last Olympic games, even the British Merchant Marine Ensign was not recognized as representing Canada. Instead Canadians were degraded by having to fly the British flag.

A distinctive flag will be the first step in identifying Canada as an autonomous nation free from all the bonds of servitude to Britain. Much of today's apathy would be changed to patriotism, and then, and only then, could all the citizens of Canada call themselves Canadian.

FIVE CLOSED DOORS

by T. Grywinski

Tension pervaded the cafeteria like the pungent odor of cheap perfume. It hung in the air like smoke on a humid day. A large group of people in their late teens and early twenties stood at the left end before five closed doors. Every few minutes a nervous cackle would pierce the incessant chatter of the crowd. They seemed like mourners at a funeral. In the center and to the right end, there was a handful of people sitting at the tables. A tall boy of slender build of about twenty walked in. He was about six foot, one hundred and sixty pounds, had long black hair, very simple features, wore horned rimmed glasses. He was the type everyone imagined an intellectual to look like. He pushed his way through the crowd and sat down at a table. He pulled out a cigarette and had to strike the match three times before he got a light. Nervously he played with his cigarette until he squashed the end. Butting it viciously, he glanced over his shoulder at the people standing before the five closed doors. About three minutes later, two boys in their early twenties walked in. He thought they recognized him and he forced a feeble smile but they walked right passed him and sat down a few tables over. He could catch parts of their conversation. The tall blond one with the pimpled face was speaking.

“When 100 kilograms of TNT, what is.....?”

The conversation died into a mumble. He looked at his watch. Beads of perspiration began to form on his forehead. His hands became extremely clammy. He kept wiping them with his handkerchief. Rising from the table, he pushed himself toward the direction of the five closed doors. A look of disgust and fright grew on his face as his eyes surveyed the people around him. His attention switched from the crowd to the five doors. The doors swung open. The people poured through them like a flood tide. He was involuntarily swept along. Once through the doors, he sat down at the first empty chair he saw. He looked with horror at the paper laying on the table in front of the chair. Glancing at the heading of it, he turned a ghostly white. 305 PHYSICS FINAL EXAMINATION.

THREE PRAIRIE MYTHS

by Walter Unger

Whenever the boy had to fetch the cows from behind the bush he was overcome with fear. For years now, two vindictive crows had nested in the tallest poplar. Whenever the youth approached their home, especially when the young were about to hatch, a black feathered parent would swoop down menacingly on the innocent intruder. The other, unseen, would encourage its mate with raucous clamour. As he grew older, the boy learned to use a sling, and began to taunt the crows. Soon a well-aimed rock struck down his black adversary. It writhed on the ground, inarticulate, dishevelled and insignificant. But, still afraid to come near his old enemy, the lad reloaded his sling and dispatched him from a distance. Then, as he courageously approached and trod the dusky head into the dirt, its dark mate flew silently from the poplar.

As far back as they could remember, the gophers had lived on a grassy margin between two grainfields. Here they remained unmolested, close to an annual and bountiful supply of wheat, rye or oats. They ate only the choicest well-filled grain. In their obsession with these luxuries, and in their constant wandering from side to side to obtain them, eventually they trampled down and killed all the grass and weeds on their margin. But this was just as well; for now they could survey the luscious grainfields better. Then came the drought. First there was a poor crop: then none, and the gophers perished.

The old man and the boy sat on a stonepile, following the silent arcing flight of a marsh hawk. "If we were up there, we could see the contour of the old lake bottom beneath the waving wheat. Out there on the summerfallow we should make out the lighter patches of soil where once thick poplars grew. Under the alfalfa we might still discern the limits of the first small homestead." The boy picked up his rifle and followed the hawk in his gunsight. "Why should I want to see that? I can see more from here". A sharp crack echoed into the autumn sunset. A moment later the hawk swooped high and away. The old man soon lost sight of it in the dark east. "Only I could have hit him, but such a thing I would never have dared."



THE MAX FERGUSON SHOW

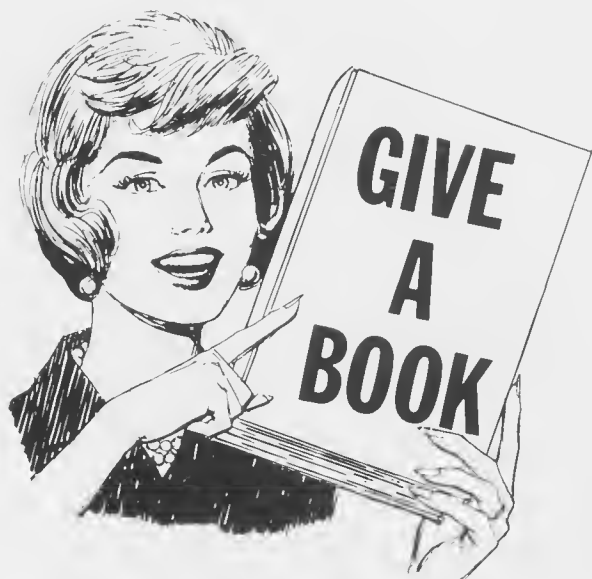
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MANITOBA COMMITTEE on ALCOHOL EDUCATION

Department of Education, Room 42,
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THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In the hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
 The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
 While visions of sugar-plums danced through their heads;
 And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
 Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap, —
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.
 The moon, on the breast of the new-fallen snow,
 Gave a lustre of midday to objects below;
 When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
 But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick,
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled and shouted and called them by name:
 "Now Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
 On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!
 To the top of the porch, to the top of the wall!
 Now, dash away, dash away, dash away all!"
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,
So, up to the house-tops the coursers they flew,
With a sleigh full of toys, — and St. Nicholas too.
 And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof
 The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
 As I drew in my head and was turning around,
 Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.
 His eyes how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!
 His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry;
 His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
 And the beard on his chin was a white as snow.
The stump of the pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.
He had a broad face, and a little round belly
That shook, when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.
 He was chubby and plump, — a right jolly old elf —
 And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself.
 A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
 Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.
 He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
 And away they all flew like the down of a thistle,
 But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight:
 "Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!"

by Clement Clarke Moore

